RESTORATION REVIEW

Leroy Garrett, Editor

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You who obey me, my saving power will rise on you like the sun and bring healing like the sun's rays. You will be as free and happy as calves let out of a stall. – Mal. 4:2

(Drawing by Anita McAlister, Denton, Texas)

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The Ancient Order …

THE ESSENTIAL, THE IMPORTANT, AND THE INDIFFERENT

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things. —Acts 15:28

We would all do well to read the scriptures, especially those of the New Covenant, with this threefold distinction in mind. Even in the Bible, not to mention our modern church life, one sees that some things are essential, while others are important and still others indifferent. It would help us to get things in proper perspective if we keep these distinctions in mind. True, we may in some instances disagree on what "issues" and practices fall into which of the three categories, but we are not likely to make much headway until we are aware of such distinctions. As a philosophy teacher I have often pointed out that a person never learns to think critically and analytically until she learns to make distinctions. Part of being an educated person is to learn what is important over against what is not, and certainly to recognize what is essential and not simply important. Socrates, the father of philosophy, taught his students. that few people ever really learn to distinguish *reality* from *appearance.* The suggestion well applies to Bible study.

The leaders of the primitive church were aware of some such distinction. Those involved in what we have come to call "the Jerusalem Conference" —even by Church of Christ folk who do not believe in conferences!— found themselves within the stress of polarities. The issue was the Gentile converts to the faith. Should they be accepted on the same basis as the Jews. simply by faith in Christ Jesus, or should they be required first to become Jews, more or less, and then Christians? Some of the Jewish believers who had come to Antioch were insisting, "Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved." (Acts 15:1). This caused a lot of dissension and debate, with such "liberals" as Paul and Barnabas leading the attack, which shifted the controversy from Antioch to Jerusalem, before the apostolate itself. The conference produced some dramatic moments and real valor. The apostles Peter and James, who probably never completely overcame their prejudice toward Gentiles, were real heroes, moved as they were by the force of scripture and by the Holy Spirit within them.

It was after there had been much debate that Peter rose and said, and I like the way he referred to our heavenly Father: "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and

believe. And God who knows the heart bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us; and he made no distinction between us and them, but cleansed their hearts by faith."

Then he nailed the legalists, transcending their prejudice: "Now therefore why do you make trial of God by putting a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will." Peter's rebuke is as appropriate in the church today as it was then, for some of us want to put the yoke of law-keeping and legalism upon the necks of those who have been saved by God's grace as well as the rest of us.

James was especially magnanimous toward his Gentile brothers, the very one we might expect to be hardnosed. He had the advantage of hearing Paul and Barnabas recite the wonders God had wrought by their hands among the Gentiles, and he was moved by what Peter had said and by what the prophets had said in scripture. "My judgment is," he told them. and his decision would about settle the matter. "that we should not trouble those of the Gentiles who turn to God." It was a simple admonition, and one that should not have been necessary. *Let's not give our brothers in Christ a hard time!* We should not have to be told something so obvious. but it is as applicable to us as it was to them. We should write above the door of all our buildings: *Let's not trouble each other!*

James named four things that he deemed necessary for the new Gentile converts, the Jewish-Gentile problem being what it was. They were set forth in a letter to be circulated among the missionary churches. and that's where Acts 15:28 comes in. "it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell."

These requirements were set forth so as to placate the Jews. For the sake of unity they were deemed essential. Except for the last one they could not ordinarily be made essential for all Christians for all time. and so we could not apply this text to someone today who likes blood pudding. And since none of us follows the kosher type of bleeding of animals, we all violate the third regulation. This illustrates how even essentials may be limited to particular situations. So we must always ask: *essential for what and for how long?*

I spoke of James being magnanimous at a time when he might have thrown his weight around. It is noteworthy that in writing to his Gentile brothers that James studiously avoided issuing a command as such. “It seemed good to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things.” No ultimatums. no commands, even from the ruler of the Mother Church. That should say something to those of us “who are somewhat” in the church today.

James was not only magnanimous but also discerning. There were a lot of accretions and claptrap that some Jews would have laid on their Gentile brothers. but James looked for what was absolutely necessary to the situation. and that only. It is a good lesson for us to learn.

If we look for what is essential for unity. fellowship, and brotherhood, over against what is only important. we might all be surprised to find our list of requirements dwindling the more we study and pray. In recent years many of our folk have discovered that such questions as agencies, societies. millennial theories, Sunday Schools. instrumental music, methods of serving the Supper. glossolalia. sponsoring churches, and sundry doctrines are not essentials. Some of them are not even important. Many of us who have become liberated from our “lawful” and awful past. which we remember as oppressive and debilitating. find that the pet notions and practices that we once cherished as absolutes gradually diminish in our esteem from essentials to matters of importance to matters of indifference. It must have been so with those who first turned to Jesus. Once they saw in him the way. the truth. and the life their little systems were no longer either necessary or important.

I am indebted to J. S. Lamar for the title of this essay. He was one of our most respected preachers of the third generation, having lived from 1829 to 1908. He along with Errett, Lard, and Franklin, served on a committee that created the Louisville Plan in 1869, an effort to save the faltering American Christian Missionary Society that had begun in 1849. The society was saved but not by that plan. Lamar was a good thinker and a fine writer, well representing what was then known as “the Disciples’ plea.” When Z. T. Sweeney published *New Testament Christianity* in 1923 in three volumes, made up of sermons by outstanding men of that era, one by Lamar on “The Essential, the Important and the Indifferent” was the first selection for the first volume.

Lamar found two things to be essential: faith in Christ and obedience to him in baptism. Faith is not mere intellectual assent, but “Our convictions must be so deep and earnest and heartfelt that it leads to an actual and practical acceptance of the Lord Jesus *in*

the character and offices which make Him the Christ." So faith implies obedience. As for what is important, Lamar concedes that in a sense everything related to Christian faith is "essential," if not for being then for well-being, and he draws a distinction between these. The absolute essentials are those things that give the sinner *being* in Christ. The important things are those that provide the Christian with *well-being,* all the things that make us better, wiser, stronger believers.

Many, many things associated with our Christian life, says Lamar, are matters of indifference, but they are allowed to grow into "issues" and become the nuclei for parties. "However trivial a matter may be," he writes, "it acquires a sort of importance, and becomes sometimes practically momentous, by reason of the feelings and prejudices which are engendered by it." Writing at a time in our history when instrumental music was an issue but not yet openly divisive, he appeals for toleration on such matters, suggesting that "the true, catholic church of the future" will be sufficiently free not only to tolerate such differences between congregations but actually encourage such peculiar tastes and peculiar preferences. As he puts it: "If they want an organ, let them have it. If they are averse to it, respect their preference." He says it is a weakness of human nature to suppose that we must have uniformity respecting all these secondary matters, and that others must accept our tastes and be governed by our preferences if we are to accept them.

Lamar says he prefers this "spontaneous variety" on all the nonessential matters to a stale, dry, dead uniformity. He sees different congregations in the same town, satisfying the tastes and preferences of the whole community in non-essentials, and yet all of them free of sectism and all being the one Body in faith and obedience to Christ. Otherwise you have opinions and preferences made a test of fellowship and each congregation becomes a sect with each one appealing to but a small fraction of the community. And they are necessarily at war with each other!

This impresses us as sound and sensible, and J. S. Lamar can hardly be dismissed as a wild-eyed liberal. He reflects the best thinking of the pioneers, and it is what our people have always stood for except for the "Church of Christism" that has emerged in recent generations.

And it is true to the Ancient Order for in the New Covenant scriptures we see a distinction drawn between the basic core of faith and obedience, which was true of all the churches, and the less vital matters that range all the way from important to indifferent.

We are reminded of the plan for the unity of all Christians as set forth by Alexander Campbell in 1841, which is an appeal to the recognized essentials: "*Resolved*, that the union of Christians can be scripturally effected by requiring a practical acknowledgment of such articles of belief and such rules of piety and ,morality as are admitted by all Christian denominations." —*the Editor*

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NO HOPE FOR THE DIVORCED?

We cannot, therefore, fellowship any one that has DIVORCED and REMARRIED for ANY OTHER CAUSE OR REASON than that given in the Bible. —Bulletin of Church of Christ, Lamesa, Texas, April 2, 1978.

This is part of "A Statement of Policy" issued by the Downtown Church of Christ in Lamesa, Texas and signed by its six elders. This is tantamount to saying that those who are divorced (and remarried) cannot be a part of that Church of Christ. The only exceptions are those who have "a scriptural cause," according to the policy statement, and that is fornication or adultery. All others need not apply!

Take the case of the couple that ran off while they were both in high school and got married. With their parents' help they were able to keep their marriage intact for several years. By the time their two children came along they were determined to make it, for the sake of the children. But they never really had much of a marriage. Bad came to worse, and they eventually separated and finally divorced. Incompatibility. They were by then only in their late 20's. After a while they both married again, and this time they are both making it work. Let's say one of the families moved to Lamesa, Texas where they meet a Christian couple that leads them to Christ.

The couple that led them to Christ introduces them to the Downtown Church of Christ. But the church will not accept them into its fellowship because of the divorce in their background. The "reason" was not adultery or fornication. The divorce dates back a decade or more by now, and all parties involved are trying to forget it in their struggle to put life back together. The original couple now has other children in their second marriages. One may as well talk about sweeping back the ocean as to suggest that the original marriage be reconstituted. The only other alternative that would satisfy the Downtown church would be for the new Christians to separate, causing still another

divorce, and live in a celibate state *for the rest of their lives*. This is what the Downtown Church of Christ in Lamesa understands to be the will of God in such a case, as well as a lot of other of our churches. Our leading periodicals are running articles by leading ministers upholding this kind of teaching.

Such a couple, with a divorce in its past, cannot be accepted into the fellowship of the saints, irrespective of how much they love Jesus and want to serve him. They could be forgiven of any and every sin you might name, including unfaithfulness to each other since their marriage, *except divorce.* The Church of Christ is the only place in the world where divorce is the unpardonable sin!

These well-meaning but misled brethren in Lamesa are selling the forgiveness of God for a mess of Church of Christ tradition. and it would cheer my heart to help deliver them from such oppressive religion. Let us all look at that great promise in Heb. 7:25: "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." God's mercy has no measure for those "who draw near to God through Him." as the New American Standard has it. It is dangerous business for a church that bears the name of Christ to draw the line on *any* sinner that seeks to draw near to God.

Let our churches be as forgiving as Psa. S6:5 says the Father is: "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." He is merciful to *all* those that call upon Him. and He is *ready* to forgive them all. Who will dare say that this excludes the divorced? Eph. 1:7 says that in Christ we have "the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." Has God's storehouse of grace become barren so that He is poor in mercy toward some of those who call upon Him? God's grace is so rich that it can afford to reach out to a proud man like myself. or to "the chiefest of sinners." Saul of Tarsus himself, a persecutor of Christians. If Jesus could enfold the harlots, the despised tax collectors, the lepers, the slaves, and the sinners within his loving embrace, why must we exclude the divorced? Indeed, Christ taught that every sin that one commits, except the one unpardonable sin, will be forgiven. Is the sin of divorce the unpardonable sin?

The Lamesa brethren would no doubt say that they will forgive and accept into their fellowship the divorced person if she will repent, and then *they* determine the character of that repentance, based upon what they presume "the Bible clearly teaches." Their terms are the breakup of still another marriage or a celibate life, in case the original marriage cannot be reconstituted! They do not realize that they are making their own cruel deductions

(which elders and preachers do not follow so stringently when divorce strikes their own family!) the word of God. I deny that the Bible teaches any such thing. To the contrary, this view of *hopelessness* for those who divorce and remarry is a repudiation of what the Bible teaches. And it is a case of laying upon folk burdens too heavy for them to bear. It is cruel, oppressive, insensitive. irresponsible, pharisaical, and sinful.

I say it repudiates what the Bible says because they would put asunder what God has joined together, and Matt. 19:6 plainly states: "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." So as to get a couple to do what they call "repent," they would have them break up their marriage. In their more gracious moments they might allow the couple to remain legally married so long as they have separate bedrooms and not sleep together, for they are "living in adultery" so long as they continue their normal relationship. Needless to say that "living in adultery" is part of the language of Ashdod, born of ecclesiastical speculation and philosophical deductions, and is nowhere in scripture. Furthermore it is a nonsensical statement, for it is an impossibility for anyone to "live in adultery." She might *commit* adultery, just as she might *commit* murder. No one referred even to Eichmann or Hitler as "living in murder."

What is odd about this clerical jargon is that it is applied *only* to our poor brothers and sisters who have gone through the horror of a divorce and then remarry, "except for the cause of fornication." It is never applied to the most licentious playboy who shacks up with every gal that will have him. They never say of such a one. "He is living in fornication." But some dear brother, who may never have committed adultery in his life, is stigmatized with "living in adultery" if he is married for the second time.

The basic fallacy in this oppressive doctrine is the supposition that the person who divorces and remarries, without a scriptural cause, is not really married or is in some way unlawfully married. This being the case the clergy has no qualms about tearing asunder what God has joined together—for God has not *really* joined them since they didn't have the right to marry. Repentance therefore implies the breakup of an illicit relationship.

This does not conform to the facts of scripture. Jesus says, "whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another committeth adultery" (Lk. 16:18). Two facts: he puts away his wife: he marries another woman. He is *married* to her, and Jesus recognizes that as a fact. They are man and wife, one flesh. If they are married, God joined them together. And when people are married they are not committing adultery when they sleep together.

Jesus makes it clear that a man sins when he divorces his wife and marries another. But still he *is* married to the second woman. Jesus nowhere suggests that repentance implies that the man's second marriage must be dissolved.

Jesus said to the woman in John 4 "You have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband." Why didn't he say something like "You had one husband and you've lived in adultery with four other men, just like the one you now have." That would fit Church of Christ doctrine, but is not what is said. The woman at the well had no doubt lived a sinful life, and there were surely some bad marriages in her persistent efforts. But all five men *were* legal husbands, and Jesus does not fault her on this score, but that she was living with a sixth man who was *not* her husband. She would therefore be committing adultery with him every time she slept with him, not "living in adultery." But she was *not* guilty of adultery when she had relations with the other five men, for she was married to them. Jesus says so. Should such a woman present herself at my congregation, we would advise her to honor the institution of marriage and marry the man she now

lives with or else move out and be sexually celibate, until some good Christian man comes along who wants her as his wife. If there were a string of divorces from those five husbands she has had, I would urge that we forget what has gone before and press on toward the goal of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

We would accept her because of her faith and repentance, realizing that the past is irreversible and the sins we have done cannot always be made right. That is what God's mercy and forgiveness means. But the woman at the well would apparently have a hard time being accepted by the Church of Christ in Lamesa. They would have her look up husband number 1, who would be the only lawful husband she ever had, and go back to him, then repent of "living in adultery" in the four succeeding "marriages," which were really no different from being shacked up with the sixth guy. If husband number 1 in the meantime became a Christian and is living happily with his present wife and their children, then *he* would have to break up *that* home and return to his first wife, scattering children and tears along the way. And what a marriage that reconstituted relationship would be!

Either that or our dear sister at the well, as young and beautiful as she still is, has to live alone for the rest of her life, even when God said it is not good for a woman to be alone. Only the clergy could concoct so ridiculous a doctrine, outdoing the weirdest witch doctor and his magic potions. And I have more patience with the witch doctor since he doesn't blame his concoction on the scriptures.

I t is enough for the church to recognize divorce for what it is, a tragic failure and a sin against God, though maybe not always wilful. As with any other sin, it can and will be forgiven. However dark one's past may be, however tragic, however sinful, "God's wonderful grace is greater than all my sins," as the old hymn goes.

The scriptures set forth a principle that reveals how the heavenly Father deals with us amidst all our hangups, whether it be our divorces or our sectarianism. It is in 2 Cor. 8:12: "If the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have." The apostle set forth this principle in reference to the Corinthians helping the poor saints in Judea. but it applies generally.

If the *readiness* is there, if one truly desires to do God's will, God expects of her only what is within the range of her capacity. God does not expect us to do the impossible. It is *acceptable,* and what a beautiful liberating word that is!, according to one's ability to respond. Since God does not demand of His children that which is cruelly oppressive, but rather that which is within their emotional, economic, and intellectual capacity, we should avoid overbearing measures on our brothers and sisters.

It is easy enough for elders and preachers who have not had to suffer through the trauma of divorce to lay upon the unfortunate ones a standard of response that is unreasonable and impossible. John tells us that God's commandments are not grievous and Jesus assured the downtrodden that *his* yoke was easy. Should we seek to make it otherwise? —*the Editor*

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WOULD JESUS HAVE USED TV?

We might presume at the outset that Jesus would have used whatever media would be available in his proclamation of the kingdom of God, but it might not be so. As Isaiah saw the Messiah in the dim future, "He will not cry or lift up his voice or make it heard in the street," which would at least refer to the unique and humble aspect of his method. He did not talk, think, or behave like ordinary man, and he employed "what is low and despised" so as to set at naught the wisdom of man. It may be, therefore, that he would have passed up an opportunity to go on national TV at prime time in order to present his message to all of Israel in a glorious burst of instant communication.

Malcolm Muggeridge, one time editor of London's *Punch* and a noted lecturer who is now witnessing for the Christ he once rejected, is persuaded that Jesus would *not* have used TV had it been available to him. In fact, in a lecture in John Stott's All-Saints Church in London recently, he suggested that if Jesus had been offered the use of TV it would have been "the fourth temptation" and that it would have been resisted like the other three temptations. He imagines how the fourth temptation would have come about. Some rich Roman tycoon, an impresario of the games, in passing through Galilee, happens to hear Jesus teaching a crowd of people. The extravagance of Jesus' words holds his attention: how God's love falls with abandon on the just and unjust alike, how we are to love our enemies and do good to those who harm us, how if an eye offends it must be plucked out and if a limb it must be amputated. If such verbal prodigality holds his attention, the tycoon reasons, why would it not have a similar impact upon the general public. He sees Jesus a potential TV star, even a superstar.

So the tycoon goes to work to "properly present" Jesus. He has his representatives in Jerusalem to "puff' Jesus. Back in Rome he has his associates prepare the proper setting, with fountains playing, a lush atmosphere, organ music, good chorus line (perhaps from Delphi), some big names from the games—gladiators in full rig, priests and priestesses from the Aphrodite Temple. Jesus would need a special hairdo and robe for the act, and a beard trim. For safety's sake his words would be put on autocue. But the tycoon wondered if Jesus could read. Well, it doesn't matter, he figured, for the show would have to be mimed anyhow, and because of the language difficulty they'd have to use lipsinc. The tycoon also suggested that his associates bring some of Jesus' followers to Rome also, especially the Baptist, a very picturesque guy with a great tangled beard and dressed in a camel's hair shirt with a leather girdle around him. He was then in prison, but the tycoon was sure he'd be able to get the Procurator Pontius something-or-other — to free him for the occasion. He'd be great on the set in his desert get up.

But would Jesus do it? The tycoon is amused at himself for even asking the question. *Of course* he would do it, for *anyone* would jump at such a chance. After all, it would enable him to reach the whole of the Roman Empire rather than that rag, tag and bobtail bunch following him around Galilee. In propositioning Jesus the tycoon would explain that there would be no intrusion of unsuitable commercials, just a very reputable sponsor, such as the highly-respected Lucifer, Inc. No more than 'This program comes to you by the courtesy of Lucifer, Inc." at the beginning and end of the act. Why, this will put Jesus on the map and launch him off on a tremendous career as a worldwide evangelist, thought the tycoon, and it would spread his teaching throughout the civilized world and beyond. *He'd be crazy to turn it down,* he insisted.

But Jesus *was* crazy. He *did* turn it down, just as he did the other temptations. He did *not* turn the stones into bread and thereby abolish hunger lest they should think that man *can* live by bread alone. He did not jump from the top of the Temple without coming to any harm, thereby becoming a celebrity and attracting the world's attention to what he had to say. He turned down the offer of the kingdoms of this world from the hands of the Devil, even though it would have given him the political power to set up a kingdom of heaven, perhaps a super welfare state. So why should he yield to the fourth temptation of going on TV and thus move from real world to a world of fantasy? Jesus was concerned with truth and reality, the tycoon with fantasy and Images.

Jesus had his own scenario and it did not need the power and wisdom of the world's media. That scenario took him across Galilee and Judea, all the way to the cross. The effect of his life, death and resurrection not only reached the whole of the Roman Empire but civilizations that were not yet born, while the Roman Empire, with all its effective media, soon crumbled. Throughout the ages the greatest artists, poets, musicians and men of letters have sought to celebrate that scenario, majestic cathedrals have been built to enshrine it, and religious orders have been founded to serve it — and yet that drama unfolded without all the techniques of "the wisdom of this world."

We, on the other hand, with all our fantastic technology of communication whereby words and even pictures are transmitted faster than sound, do not really have that much to say or that much to show. Our communication is more of an exercise in fantasy than in truth. Our world is "the theatre of the absurd" and it says something for God's sense of humor that we are allowed to continue playing our games. It may break the heart of an editor of *Punch* when he tries to be funny about a world that is incorrigibly funnier than anything he can invent. Our technology has a built-in *reductio ad absurdum,* whereas the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, in the most literal sense, speaks for itself.

And so, in his *Christ and the Media, the* inimitable Muggeridge tells us that our Lord would not have used TV had it been available to him. Following the lecture he was asked if we, his disciples, should make use of TV, that it isn't all that important whether Jesus would have used it or not. Muggeridge is impressed with the way Jesus and his envoys spread the message, mostly one on one, and he doesn't think we need TV, which to him is both artificial and fantastic.

Even though he was a TV media man himself, he has now as a Christian resolved not to watch it anymore. He has in fact put it out of his home, and he is constantly warning Christians (even on TV!) against its evil influences. He is not saying simply that TV needs to be cleaned up and improved, for he is convinced that this cannot be done. By its very nature TV is fantasy, projecting an unreal world that is inimical to the reality that is in Christ. Even the news is "programed" for the unreal world that it portrays. That Christians will watch TV when they could be reading substantial material is to him tragic.

I am writing this essay while in St. Joseph, MO, where I am presenting studies at Central Christian Church. Having Muggeridge's thesis on my mind, I told a sister about it who teaches a class of youngsters each Sunday. She told me about this boy who had seen a lady on TV change into costume after costume, simply by twirling herself round and round. Before the little boy's eyes this lady blossomed out in one beautiful dress after another, just by twirling like a ballet dancer. He was convinced he could do this, and he stood before the class and began to twirl, supposing that his world of fancy, created by TV, would become a real world. This incident disturbed me, leaving me to wonder what we might be doing to our kids through TV, and to ourselves, and I am not referring only to violence. Maybe Muggeridge is right, that we are bringing into our very homes a device that projects fantasy into a world with which we must cope in truth and reality. Marriage, family life, sex, work, values, even the news, are fantasized. And Muggeridge notes that by the time that child has lived his life he has spent *eight years* of it before the TV set!

"Teach us to number our days
That we might apply our hearts to wisdom." — *the Editor*

In the works of man, as in those of nature, it is really the motives which chiefly merit attention. —*Goethe*

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Pilgrimage of Joy …

ARKANSAS ANTICS

W. Carl Ketcherside

I feel certain that many of my readers will be inclined to sit in judgment upon me for spending so much time detailing events surrounding one little semi-rural congregation in Arkansas. If I need to justify my own conscience I can do so by recalling that it is in such places the Spirit always works to turn the tide of sectarianism. It cannot be done initially in large metropolitan areas where pride and tradition, those twin evils which oppose all reformation, have entrenched themselves. No one in the restoration movement of which we are heirs, who remembers Washington, Pennsylvania. or Cane Ridge, Kentucky, should ever "despise the day of small things."

The struggle of men to free themselves from the encroachment of a System seeking to destroy their freedom needs to be chronicled so that future generations basking in the warm sun of liberty will not forget the price that was paid to drive the ominous clouds away. And the names of those who warred upon one side or the other need to be engraved on the pillars of history since movements are but men in action. Before I went to Beech Grove, Arkansas, there had gradually developed a kind of super-church mentality which tended to elevate to dominance large congregations whose preachers and elders were promoters and who could control rural congregations and' use them as feeder units to enhance their own image.

One of the congregations in Paragould had actually proposed to all of the rural and village churches in the county that they send their finances in to it, and allow them to arrange for a stable of preachers who could be assigned to various places and paid for from the central fund. The argument was used that since the Paragould congregation had elders and many of the smaller places did not, these elders could oversee the preachers and assure that country congregations would hear "better preaching." It is to the eternal credit of the rural congregations that they rejected this blatant attempt to take over their rights and violate their autonomy.

But what a proposed centralized presbytery could not accomplish was then attempted through "area preacher meetings." In such monthly gatherings needs were discussed, plans were devised, and machinery set up to accomplish what a professional clergy wanted to see done. Smaller congregations without preachers on their payroll had no representation. They did not know of the plans until they were already being carried out and they received a letter or visit from someone asking them to send finances to help "bear the burden." Such little places had to submit or be ostracized and castigated for refusal to cooperate in "the work of the Lord."

When W. L. Totty, who lived in Indianapolis, Indiana, heard that I was going to Beech Grove he fired a letter to the church in Paragould to tell them how to handle the matter. He advised his brethren to assault the ramparts and go in a body to Beech Grove each night. As soon as I finished my message they were to arise and take over and hold another meeting in which they could defeat anything I said. He also recommended that the Paragould brethren publicly (withdraw from the two brethren at Beech Grove who had first suggested to the congregation to have me come. By some quirk of the mail service his letter was delivered to the church in Beech Grove instead of to the one in Paragould. One of the brothers whose exclusion was recommended stood up and read it publicly to the saints.

In desperation, the preachers published a notice in *Firm Foundation* at Austin, Texas, under the heading "Ketcherside Invades the South." It called upon all preachers and members everywhere not to give aid or comfort to the brethren at Beech Grove until they repented of the grievous sin of inviting me to speak to them and renounced me and what I advocated. It was signed by J. A. McNutt and Emmet Smith, among others.

As soon as the notice appeared preachers began to enter the fray. Some called long distance. Others drove to Beech Grove. All frantically urged the brethren to cancel the work before it was too late. Sinclair Slatton, Joe Blue, George Dehoff. G. C. Brewer, W. Curtis Porter, and James D. Bales, were but a few of those who injected themselves into the business of the congregation and vainly tried their hand. The more pressure that was brought to bear from the outside the more determined did the little group become not to be shoved around.

It was about this time I began receiving crank letters from some of the brethren in Paragould. A few of them contained overt threats and implied I might even suffer bodily injury. One said if I did not cancel the meeting and hurry up about it a group of men from all over that section would meet me as "a welcoming committee" and make it so hot for me I would wish I had never come. I sent the letters to the brethren at Beech Grove who called me by telephone to say that it was they who invited me to come and only they had the right to invite me not to come. They told me to come on and pay no attention to letters from the congregations at Paragould or Commissary.

On Saturday, July 15, I went to Beech Grove with Allen Phillips and his good family. They had lived in the vicinity of Lafe, Arkansas, for a number of years and knew most of the saints at Beech Grove. They took their vacation to go with me to help in the meeting and they were a real strength and blessing. I went to the home of Herbert and Ruby

Johnson where I was to stay. I have never found the hospitality which they extended to me surpassed. I had no(been there an hour until brothers and sisters began to drive in from all around. None of them had ever seen me and they had come to “size me up.” They were sincere, humble and unpretentious. It was easy for me to love them every one.

We began the next day under auspicious circumstances. There was a large crowd in the morning and at night the building was filled. The attention was perfect in spite of the heat. On the final night the audience overflowed the building and many could not get in. Everyone came except the preachers. They were conspicuous by their very absence. Always before they rallied to a “big meeting” and were on the front seats. Now they had resolved to lie low and allow me to hold the meeting and after it had all “blown over” they would move back in and straighten the congregation out. When I announced that I would return in six months and conduct a study of the Word for two weeks, open to all in the area, it began to dawn upon them that a boycott would no more serve their purpose than open attack.

The day our meeting began the church in Paragould started one with E. R. Harper, of Abilene, Texas. It was calculated to keep their members away. On the first Sunday morning Brother Harper went on the air and made an attack upon Beech Grove and upon me personally. The next day three of us went in to the station, met with the manager, and requested time in which to reply. It was granted us at the regular station rate. We announced it well in advance and publicized it in the Paragould paper. It is possible we may have had the largest listening audience in the history of the station. We were particularly fortunate in that our program was aired live just after the noon news broadcast.

During the week letters were mailed to every box holder on the rural routes near Beech Grove. They were signed by the elders and preachers at Paragould and demanded that I debate W. L. Totty or Sterl Watson. I read one of the letters from the pulpit and over the radio station and stated I had already debated both men publicly and did not consider either of them a representative man on the issues at hand. I countered by offering to meet either N .B. Hardeman, G. C. Brewer, or George Benson, as top men in the college ranks. But the meeting closed without a debate being arranged. In spite of the tension I immersed four souls in the nearby drainage ditch. Two more made public acknowledgment of wrongs and asked to be restored to the active service of the Lord.

When the time came for me to leave, all of us realized that we had simply gone through the first skirmish and the real battle lay ahead. But I knew the cause was in good hands. Men like James King, Avery Cunningham, and Herbert Johnson had been tested by

fire for a year. They were ably assisted by a number of others, among whom special mention should be given to Louis Kappelman, Ellis Hots and Franklin Cunningham. Not a person left the congregation, even under pressure from relatives in Paragould. Every time I thought of the brethren as I made my way back to Saint Louis a phrase from Emerson kept ringing in my mind, “Here once the embattled farmers stood, and fired the shot heard round the world.”

In August I went to Midland, Texas for a Bible Study which was held in a room at the Air Terminal where so many men had received their flight training during the war. The parachute jumping platforms and the dummy bombs were still in evidence. Our meetings were in Building T-284, which was formerly used for storing ammunition. Here where men had been taught to kill we sought to teach others how to live. From Texas I returned to Windsor, Ontario, where our series was blessed of God and several were immersed into Christ. The congregation was growing in grace and knowledge as well as in number, under the guidance of Adam Bruce and William Horrocks as shepherds. But now there were consecrated younger men such as William Brown and Robert Liles who were developing rapidly.

When I returned from Canada there was a letter urgently requesting me to come to Belfast, North Ireland. I postponed a reply for a few days in order to give thought to all the ramifications involved since I was leading a busy life. While I hesitated another letter arrived pleading that I come. I finally consented to go in mid-February after the annual Saint Louis study and the follow-up meeting at Beech Grove. Our daughter, Sharon Sue, who had recently finished high school and was attending the Gradwohl School of Laboratory Technique agreed to edit the paper during my absence. Jerry would look after the mailing and Nell would continue to take care of the subscription and address files.

Arvel Watts, Ellis Crum and Bob Duncan taught special subjects during the Saint Louis study which reached its conclusion on December 15. Students were in attendance from Kansas, Missouri. Illinois. Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Colorado and Pennsylvania. We were particularly blessed in having with us two capable black brethren — Leroy Durley and William Baker.

I arrived back in Beech Grove on January 7, prepared to begin our two weeks of study the next day. The opposition had been busy during the interim. The latest prepared “bomb” was a tract by J. A. McNutt attacking O. C. Dobbs. Sr., of Birmingham. Alabama. and myself. I had never met Brother Dobbs but had heard a great deal about him. He was in the

first graduating class of the original Alabama Christian College when G.A. Dunn was president. He came away from the school convinced that the gravest threat to the primitive order of things was the growth of the one man preacher-pastor system.

Brother Dobbs developed a hernia and in order to contain or control it, cut a piece of material from an old automobile tire, out of which he fashioned a truss. The hernia corrected itself with this assistance. This led him to experiment until he invented trusses for various types of hernia after which he created the Dobbs Truss Company to market his product. Since this was prior to the time when surgery was used for the condition, the company soon became international in scope with representatives in the major cities of the world. During the years when the business flourished Brother Dobbs became quite well-to-do. With characteristic enthusiasm he plunged into the fight against the "growing pastor system."

When he learned of the growing storm at Beech Grove he mailed the brethren a bundle of his booklets which they passed out with considerable eagerness. This injected a new political angle into the fracas. It had been previously hinted that I was leading a "Yankee invasion" into one of the strongholds of the "Old South" and bringing in northern doctrine. It was purposely made to appear that I was a "religious carpetbagger." But O. C. Dobbs was from Birmingham, only a little way from where Jefferson Davis had been named President of "The Confederate States of America." He spoke with a southern accent and even wrote with one.

Brother McNutt knew he had to act quickly. He printed a book for general distribution in the area under the heading "Pastorating and Evangelizing." While a lot of it was devoted to trying to patch up what Brother Harper had said and my reply to him on the radio, quite a little space was devoted also to Brother Dobbs. He was accused of being one-sided, biased and prejudicial, and also of being "beside himself." Coming from the source it did, Brother Dobbs felt highly complimented and fired off a letter inviting Brother McNutt to a written debate which he would print at his expense.

All of this had kept the interest from waning and when I came for the Bible Study excellent audiences gathered every afternoon and night. We did not dwell on the troublesome issues but concentrated on teaching the Word. One afternoon the class was visited by Brother McNutt and the elders from Paragould. Sterl Watson had been imported from Saint Louis to bolster the cause. As soon as I had finished the lesson he arose and

demanded that I debate either Rue Porter, W. Curtis Porter, or G.K. Wallace. I agreed to meet either one or all of them. They asked me to write out propositions and submit them. I did so that week. But they could not agree upon them and the attempt fell flat.

One thing that gave me a great deal of hope was the eagerness of the people to know the Word. At each session we had folk from the community who were not members of the Church of Christ. The leaven of peace seemed to be working and I left feeling that good was being done in spite of outside agitation. Arrangements had been made that when I returned from Ireland I would hold another meeting, if the Lord willed. It was a great prospect!

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Highlights in Restoration History …

ISAAC ERRETT'S LIST OF OUR PRESENT NEEDS

This is not intended as an essay on Isaac Errett as such, however consistent that would be to the purposes of this journal. That will have to await another time. Our purpose here is to pass along to you Errett's list of "Present Needs of Disciples" that he included in his *Walks About Jerusalem* in 1871. The seven points that he made strike us as appropriate to the 1970's as they were to the 1870's. We believe they will encourage you to implement them in your own life and to use them in helping to make the church what Christ would have it be.

But just a word about Errett so that you can have some appreciation of what he says here. He was a man of action as well as of ideas, and he was a confirmed pragmatist. Among the first of our "liberals," he was always getting himself in trouble with the conservatives. He must have been the first of our preachers to accept the title *Reverend.* albeit with modest enthusiasm, and then only when friends gave him a doorplate with that title before his name. He was one of the first to practice the one-man pastor system among us, and he was an avid supporter of cooperative agencies and societies in a day when they almost died from lack of support. He wrote for and travelled with Alexander Campbell when the Bethany patriarch was an old man, and he upset Campbell by taking an antislavery position. Campbell thought slavery, pro or con, should be kept as a matter of personal opinion and not made an issue in the church.

Errett thought the movement needed a clear-cut statement of what it was and what it stood for, so he came out with "A Synopsis of the Faith and Practice of the Church of Christ," which consisted often articles of faith. And did he get clobbered by the "Editor Bishops," especially by Moses Lard and Benjamin Franklin, who cried *Creed' Creed'.* even if Errett denied it being such, for it was not something to be imposed on anyone, but served only as a summary of what we stood for. No one seemed to object to the points made, but that he made them. This was in a day when our people had begun to fight among themselves. Division was on the horizon. Errett was asked to edit a new journal, the *Christian Standard.* the purpose of which was to save the brotherhood from legalism and sectism. In its first issue in 1866 it carried a notice of the death of Alexander Campbell. It was a new era for the Stone-Campbell Movement, and for the next decade (he died in 1888) Isaac Errett was the most influential man among our people.

He was always zeroing in on problems, always putting a finger on the main point as he saw it. When they started fussing over the organ, he said he thought some churches needed one, judging by their singing. But others didn't. In any event it should not be introduced if anyone objected. When they argued over whether the pious un-immersed are Christians, he insisted that there is only one true mark of a Christian, *Christlikeness*, immersed or not.

Isaac Errett must have been something else, and I can hardly wait to meet him in that land where editors are no longer bishops. Things were grim for our folk in 1871, and Editor Errett. who had a thing about lists, made out still another one, on our present needs. You may agree that the "present" becomes timeless. Here it is, all from Isaac Errett, without editorial comment:

1. The preaching of Christ crucified, so as to enthrone Him in the hearts of men in supreme dominion. This is better than theories of conversion—better than a brave tilt at Calvinism, or any other ism.

2. A greatly increased diligence in the study of the Holy Scriptures—without *spectacles,* even of the most modern manufacture.

3. A deeper insight into the *spiritual* attractions of the gospel—such as shall lead us to seek after the "communion of the Holy Spirit," which is the foretaste of heavenly bliss—the beginning of everlasting life-the "earnest of the inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."

4. A more cheerful, and elevated, and fervent piety—a life of prayer and praise —of grateful love and adoration, in the closet, the family and the church.

5. A more complete conquest of the pride and selfishness of the world—so as, in humility and self-denial, to devote ourselves to the benevolent and philanthropic aims of the Christian life. A deeper sympathy with suffering humanity-such as will lead us in the footsteps of Christ, to labor for the world's redemption.

6. A lofty attachment to righteousness—so as to make life a constant exemplification of truth and justice—a living condemnation of all injustice, oppression and deceit.

7. A more vital faith in God, which will enable us to throw ourselves sublimely on His strong arm for support and do our duty, leaving the consequences in His hands. (These seven points from *Walks A bout Jerusalem*, by Isaac Errett, p. 158) —*the Editor*

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TALK ABOUT OUTREACH!

This classified ad, appearing in *The Christian*, official organ of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) caught my eye: "Faith Christian Church, Hollywood, Florida, accepts divorcees, alcoholics, gossipers, bigots, sex offenders, thieves, mixed marriages—God's acceptance of all people as His children. Come as you are! Phone (305) 989-8116."

They got more than they bargained for, their ad appearing in another paper that they didn't have to pay for!

Looking at this ad in its most favorable light, we may assume that our brethren at Faith Christian in Hollywood, Florida desire to be a redemptive community that reaches out to all those who need God's forgiveness, with no lines drawn. We are not to take the ad to mean that they in any sense approve of or even minimize the grossness of such sins as bigotry or gossip-the very idea of putting such sins in the same category as thievery! The ad says to me that no one has wandered so far as to be lost to God's love and concern, and this church, recognizing the depths of God's grace, welcomes them all to God's redemptive font, including the sex offenders. Making no claim that they are too good to

reject anyone but are themselves sinners saved by grace, they deem it appropriate for the lowliest of sinners to sit with them as part of God's family on earth, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

The ad says even more than that to me. It reads as if the folk at Faith Christian are sensitive to the needs of a lot of people that are usually looked down on, or at least ignored,—and sometimes maltreated—by many churches. They *welcome* the divorcees, and do not run them off, like a lot of our churches do. Sex offenders have lots of problems with the law, themselves, other people and are badly in need of help. Good for Faith Christian for saying to such ones. *We love you.* It is altogether possible that most sex offenders would suppose that they would not be really welcomed at any church anywhere. But they would at Faith Christian.

Then there is the poor alcoholic that most people condemn but few understand, and almost nobody loves. But they will be welcomed, without censure, at Faith Christian. When enough churches are *really* like that, loving each other as Jesus loves them and in turn reaching out in tender loving care to suffering humanity, then the world will believe that we are truly the disciples of Jesus.

John Locke, recognized by our pioneers as "the Christian philosopher," wrote a great deal about the church, urging, for one thing, that it be separate from the state, which was "heresy" in those days. He even wrote a commentary on Paul's epistles, which seems unlikely for a philosopher. But the point I want from him in this context is a statement he made in his *Letter Concerning Toleration* to the effect that "I esteem toleration to be the chief characteristic of the church." While others will see love as the chief trait, it could be argued that toleration (or *forbearance)* is love exemplified. We in the Churches of Christ are not exactly known as a tolerant or forbearing people, are we? Those that the Florida church welcome into their assembly would feel uncomfortable in many of our churches. I am persuaded that many of our people feel uncomfortable. Locke says toleration should be our most outstanding characteristic. That isn't bad!

Locke even uses *our* name when he' says this: "How can that be called the Church of Christ which is established upon laws that are not His, and which excludes such persons from its communion as He will one day receive into the Kingdom of Heaven." We drive some of our own divorced people from our embrace, condemning them. It will be embarrassing to find that the Lord has accepted them into his kingdom. And what does that do to our claim of being the Church of Christ?, asks the philosopher.

The primitive saints reached out to those in real trouble and deep sin. Tit. 3:3 says “We were once” and then names foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to lusts and pleasures, malice, envy, hatred. And the Corinthian church had those with even a more wretched past: fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, swindlers (1 Cor. 6:9-10). The good news reached out to them and they were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.”

That is outreach! Faith Christian seems to be thinking in these terms. More power to them!

If our churches are not like that, maybe it is because we do not have the one mark that John Locke saw as necessary to be the Church of Christ. Maybe we don’t have that loving toleration that makes those who need us most feel comfortable in our presence. Maybe we are too prim, too nice, too good, too righteous, and *too right. —the Editor*

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

A new newspaper, *Christiangraphic*, has recently begun among Christian Churches. The April issue told of a 2 million dollar edifice to be erected by Chapel Rock Christian Church in Indianapolis, and of 30,822 baptisms in a Revival Fires effort in India. The sub rate is 3.00 per annum and the address is 717 Main St., Clay City, IN 47841.

The March, 1977 issue of *Contending for the Faith* had these words from one Ray Hawk, a brother who is more peaceful than his name suggests: “Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett switched from an extreme anti-ism to liberalism. At first very few paid any attention to this switch. After all, what could two men do? Today the philosophy of these two men has invaded the ranks of the church of Christ. Even the anti-Bible class and anti-cooperation elements of the church have been affected. The *Gospel Guardian*, which is the vocal journal of the antis almost fell to the liberals when its editorial staff espoused the Ketcherside and Garrett line. How have two men been able to gain the ears of so many within the church?”

In a recent report to the alumni, President Bok of Harvard revealed that the university had refused a gift of one million dollars from a foreign government that is totalitarian and regarded the donation primarily an instrument of its foreign policy. Harvard also refused to participate in a huge health-care program in the Middle East because Jews were not allowed to participate. May we assume that *our* Church of Christ-Christian Church schools show the same moral sensitivity?

One concerned Disciple of Christ writes that "Kansas City was a tragedy," referring especially to the homosexual thing, and to the prospect of the Disciples uniting with the United Church of Christ, which already ordains homosexuals to their ministry. Another leading Disciple. now retired, is so disturbed that he believes that "the Independent movement is now the only hope for the Disciples." A Continuing Committee has been set up, a sort of task force, to take appropriate action if the Disciples should unite with the UCC or vote to ordain homosexuals. There is fear in Canada that the Disciples will split if they vote in August to join the UCC. But President Teagarten of the Disciples has explained that there was no vote either way on homosexuality. The reso1ution was to take no position, to leave the matter open for study. That of course is what disturbed many Disciples, that the delegates took no position once the question was raised. All this led me to reread Dr. W. E. Garrison's *Fork in the Road* address in which he gave the *pros* and *cons* of the Disciples becoming "a tight little denomination." He thought that while the structure and agencies might be improved the Disciples would do well to remain as they were, even if the assembled convention could not speak "officially" for "the church." Even though he was one of the wisest and most honored of all Disciples, they did not listen to him. And now Kansas City! But he was too kind and too good to say *I told you so!,* and we are not saying it for him posthumously. Rather we are urging loving forbearance toward our Disciple sisters and brothers, and that we withhold any cruel judgments, remembering that we are all imperfect members of His imperfect church on earth. I happen to know that many, many Disciples not only love our Lord Jesus Christ, but they also treasure their heritage as much as any of the rest of us. We must believe that their official resolutions and ecumenical overtures are a sincere effort to act responsibly for His church, even if we disagree.

Writing in *Broadway Bulletin* (Lubbock, Texas), published by one of the largest Churches of Christ in the world, Charles Hodge writes: "There are at least 27 factions (splits) in the Restoration Movement … What will it take? Cannot the cross of Christ bring us together? Cannot the cross transcend our pettiness? What will it take to teach us brotherhood, patience, understanding, kindness, longsuffering, forgiveness and love? Why destroy ourselves over something that will be trivial within a few short years?"

The Central Church of Christ in Irving, Texas recently conducted a "Prophecy Conference" in which at least three different positions on the millennium was presented by brethren who held those positions, and it was well attended by those of all persuasions. I was asked to present Alexander Campbell's view on the millennium since he could not be there to do it for himself. Allowing premillennialists, etc., to speak for themselves was in contrast to another conference at an area Church of Christ where premillennialism was lambasted by more than a score of speakers, but there wasn't a single premillennialist on the program, and probably not one in the audience. But straw men were scattered all over the place, slain in battle by brave commandos! The Central church's way of doing it is in keeping with our great heritage, where all sides of an issue are presented freely and openly, and the audience given an opportunity to question the speakers.

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OFFICE NOTES

We can still supply Louis Cochran's *The Fool of God,* a historical novel on the life of Alexander Campbell, a good place to begin for deeper understanding of our history. 3.80 includes postage.

Hermeneutics is the thing these days, *the* issue in Biblical studies around the world. *New Testament Interpretation: Essays on Principles and Methods*, edited by Howard Marshall of Aberdeen in Scotland, is for the more serious student, though it is not highly technical. It deals with the use of critical methods in interpretation and defines the task of exegesis, as well as a survey of the background of NT interpretation. The studies are mostly by British scholars, but one by Ralph Martin of Fuller Seminary on different ways to interpret the NT is especially helpful. The price is a hefty 12.95, but this is a substantial piece of work.

How would you advise a man whose wife has become sexually incapable because of a malfunction in her body? The problem was put to Martin Luther, who could not agree that divorce would be justifiable in such a case. If the man cannot live as a celibate, he might take a second wife, said Luther, for it is better to have two wives than to forsake one. That is only one little point in a very resourceful and timely volume on *Biblical Christian Marriage* by Cliff Edwards. You'll find the chapter on "When Christians Divorce" most helpful and the one on 'The Greatest of These is Love" is informative and encouraging. It

deals also with the problems of marriage in the middle years, often neglected by such books. We highly recommend this one at $6.95, postpaid.

If you appreciate what appears in this issue from Isaac Errett, you will certainly appreciate his *Evenings With the Bible* in three volumes. The price has gone up to 15.00 for the set, but it is still worth it and then some. We are pleased that many of our readers have purchased this set. We're probably selling more of them than the publisher himself. I am fearful it may go out of print.

A.M. Hunter is an especially fine writer. His *Gleanings from the New Testament* at 5.25 and *Interpreting the Parables* at 3.75 make for exciting reading. In *Gleanings* there are chapters on the eleventh commandment, the egoism of Christ, and the unfamiliar sayings of Jesus that you will find most informative, William Neil's *The Difficult Sayings of Jesus* is a similar kind of book, and you'll especially appreciate his treatment of the unforgivable sin. $1.80 postpaid.

William Barclay's *A Spiritual Autobiography* at 1.80 is not just about him and his experiences, but about many things, including what went on in a synagogue service in the time of Jesus.

Our bound volume for 1977, entitled *Principles of Unity and Fellowship,* should be ready by early summer. If you have placed your order, you need do no more. The book will be sent to you with invoice enclosed.

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I have been receiving RR for a year now as a gift from an anonymous donor. I consider it to be one of the nicest gifts I've ever received. After hearing so much petty bickering from some brethren, it is comforting to know that many are anxious to 'keep the faith' while at the same ,time conceding to others their own right of independent thought and dissent. *—Don Trubey, Portales, NM*

I received a subscription to your paper from a friend. I wish to cancel my subscription since I do not agree with your liberal teaching. You stated that the instrumental music issue is dead, avoidable, and 'trivial. This is completely absurd! Any issue dealing with our worship is not dead, avoidable or trivial. When we do not worship God in the way He has

instructed we are in error, and this is what you are teaching. I do not wish to have such trash in my house where my children might read it. —*Michael Brookins, Hamilton, GA*

(It should be a dead, avoidable, trivial issue in regard to unity and fellowship, not necessarily in reference to personal preference or conscience.—*Ed.*

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